

November 15, 2020 Dennis Gallaher

The Compassion of God Series – The Compassion of the Church

Look at the shift in the world: from things we can see to now shifting to what we can't see, the war over a philosophy of life, give and take is over, secular mindset is settling into every day. As Christians, how shall we live? How shall we carry forward our commissioning as ambassadors of Christ? as the bride of Christ, the body of Christ, citizens of the kingdom of God? How shall we carry it forward in an antagonistic world?

First, accept that *God knows what He is doing!* There are believers that have lived more fruitfully under pagan domination than in the freedom that we live in today. Biblical examples are Daniel, Joseph, Paul, etc. We do better when our own power is exhausted.

Second, ministry has changed. With lockdowns, masks, zooms, vaccines, online services...and it will continue to change.

Third, if the church is to be felt and known, to be light and salt, to understand the times and know what the country and church is to do, to be a city on a hill, to be a light not hidden, then the compassion of Christ must be seen and known in the world today. We must understand it's not just a brief time of studying God's Word, but that God's compassionate view of lost mankind must be something that should be the focus of our ministry.

What does compassion look like? Comfort is the practical demonstration of compassion.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. Verse 3 The Father of mercies and God of ALL comfort.* It means that every bit of comfort in the world is God's – initiated, given, and coming from God. **Verse 4** gives the purpose of God's comfort. He does not comfort us to make us comfortable but so that we can be comforters! So that we can comfort others.

Have you suffered loss? Experienced grief? Have hope deferred? Suffering is hard to bear, but it yields a discipline. **Philippians 4:11** *Not that I speak from need, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.* Why? Because God wastes nothing. **Romans 8:28** *And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.*

2 Corinthians 1:8-9 *For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, of our affliction which occurred in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life. Indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead.* Paul's outcome was to not trust in himself but to trust God. He traded self-reliance for total dependence on God.

Has this pandemic awakened our need for one another? The greater need is a true relationship with God – and that's the commissioning of the church. **John 5:19-20** *Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in the same way. For the Father loves the Son and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing.*

Can I be attuned to see what the Father is doing instead of asking the Father to do what I want? God wants to show mercy and pity and compassion to a hurting world.

2 Corinthians 7:5 *For even when we came into Macedonia our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted on every side: conflicts on the outside, fears inside.* This season for us is intense – same as Paul, conflicts without and fears within. **2 Corinthians 7:6** *But God, who comforts the discouraged, comforted us by the arrival of Titus.* That's the simple key to doing what the Father does - comfort the depressed. God's answer for the anxieties of life are often not in what we think it should be. God chose His delivery system of comfort to be a part of the body of Christ. The key: "To Be With." Comfort is the practical working out of the compassion of God.

What does comfort look like? **Romans 12:15** *Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep.* Exciting programs and events cannot touch a broken heart like the coming alongside a weeping and tender servant at times of great need. It is a part of Freedom Fellowship Church – walking with people who are hurting without trying to change them.

We desperately need Jesus. And when we are stretched out of measure, despairing, desperate within, we need comfort from another which shows a compassionate God. Comforting other people is the demonstration of a compassionate God and when we show this to a lost world, they will come to know Jesus as Lord and Savior. God will comfort us when we have times of need. God's intention then is to make us comforters. Before Christ did anything after His resurrection, He came alongside the broken disciples and said "Peace." So should we.

These days ahead will be filled with the lonely, the depressed, the fearful, the proud, the haughty, the arrogance of a society that has forsaken God. The church is commissioned to see the world through the Father's eyes.

Mark 8:22-26 *And they came to Bethsaida. And some people brought a man who was blind to Jesus and begged Him to touch him. Taking the man who was blind by the hand, He brought him out of the village; and after spitting in his eyes and laying His hands on him, He asked him, "Do you see anything?" And he looked up and said, "I see people, for I see them like trees, walking around." Then again, He laid His hands on his eyes; and he looked intently and was restored and began to see everything clearly. And He sent him to his home, saying, "Do not even enter the village."*

We need to see people as Jesus sees people. We need to know God – to have a relationship with Him. Today He will give what only He can give...forgiveness of sins, taking away guilt, and making us a child forever and ever.

The process that God established for us:

- Worship is like a plow that breaks the ground – singing and praising to prepare our hearts.
- Preaching is the throwing of the seed – the giving and hearing of God's Word.
- Altar is the rain and watering of the seed to produce a crop – letting the Holy Spirit speak to produce His work in us.

Are you broken and in need of compassion? Do you know someone broken that needs compassion? Where do you struggle to see others through Jesus eyes? How about the prickly ones? What concerns or hesitations do you have for weeping with those who weep?